

Executive Directive 2 (2006)

ESTABLISHING THE INVASIVE SPECIES WORKING GROUP

Importance of the Issue

The U.S. Government Accountability Office reports that “invasive species - harmful, nonnative plants, animals, and microorganisms – are found throughout the United States and cause damage to crops, rangelands, waterways, and other ecosystems that is estimated to cost in the billions of dollars annually.” Damage to Virginia’s ecosystems, crops, forests, and waterways caused by invasive species costs in excess of \$1.4 billion dollars annually. Invasive species are among the greatest threats to native ecosystems. The threat comes from both plants that out-compete and eliminate native plants from their habitats and invasive animals such as the zebra mussel, which threatens native freshwater systems and clogs water intake structures.

In 2005, a statewide Invasive Species Management Plan was prepared by the Department of Conservation and Recreation in cooperation with other key agencies, and that plan recommended a number of actions to be taken by agencies across state government to abate the significant environmental and economic threat invasive species pose to Virginia. The plan provides a framework for action to minimize economic, environmental, and human harm from invasive species by acting on seven key goals of coordination, prevention, early detection, rapid response, control, research, and education. A working group can ensure that state agency activities concerning invasive species are coordinated, complementary, cost-efficient and effective.

Invasive Species Working Group

I hereby establish the Invasive Species Working Group (the working group). The working group shall consist of thirteen members that includes the Secretary of Natural Resources and the Directors or Commissioners, or their designees, of the following agencies: the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, the Marine Resources Commission, the Department of Forestry, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Department of Health,

and the Department of Transportation, and four private members representing private conservation interests, private industry, local or federal government, and academic institutions appointed by the Governor. The Secretary of Natural Resources shall serve as chairman of the working group. The agency members of the working group shall serve terms coincident with their terms of offices, and the private members shall serve the term of this Executive Order.

The working group shall meet at least twice per year upon the call of the chairman. A majority of the working group shall constitute a quorum. Members of the working group shall receive no compensation for the discharge of their duties as a member of the working group. Members may be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties.

The working group may establish an advisory committee of stakeholders to provide information and advice for consideration by the working group. Members of an advisory committee shall receive no compensation from the Commonwealth, nor shall they be reimbursed by the Commonwealth for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

The working group shall have the following powers and duties:

1. Coordinate state agency implementation of the 2005 Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan. The working group may update the plan as warranted.
2. Encourage action at local, state, and regional levels to achieve the goals and objectives of the 2005 Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan, in cooperation with local governments, federal agencies, private organizations addressing invasive species, and other stakeholders;
3. Develop a list of priority invasive species that will be a focus of the working group's coordinated activities;
4. For the purpose of managing invasive species, develop an invasive species inventory protocol for use by state agencies for the assessment of lands they own or lease, and provide guidance to state agencies on the prevention and control of invasive species, including the procurement, use and maintenance of native species instead of invasive species;
5. Facilitate establishment of an information-sharing system to provide exchange of information concerning invasive species; and

6. Develop and recommend to the Governor and General Assembly legislative proposals as necessary to advance invasive species management in Virginia.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation shall provide staff support to the working group.

State Agency Action Regarding Invasive Species

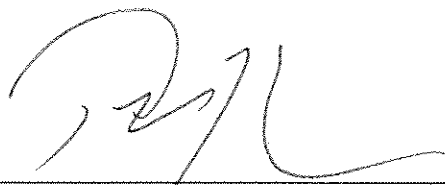
No state agency shall authorize, fund or carry out any action that is likely to cause or promote the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States or elsewhere unless the agency has determined and made public its determination that the benefits of such actions clearly outweigh the potential harm caused by invasive species and that all feasible and prudent measures to minimize risk of harm will be taken in conjunction with the actions.

Recognizing that certain non-native species provide extremely valuable economic, food, and horticultural products, some species not native to the ecosystem cause environmental or economic harm or harm to human health. Nothing in this executive order is intended to include as invasive (i) any agricultural crop generally recognized by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services or the United States Department of Agriculture as suitable to be grown in the Commonwealth, or (ii) any aquacultural organism recognized by the Marine Resources Commission or Department of Game and Inland Fisheries as suitable to be propagated in the Commonwealth.

Effective Date of the Executive Directive

This executive directive shall become effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect until July 28, 2007, unless amended or rescinded by further executive directive.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia this 28th day of July 2006.



Timothy M. Kaine, Governor